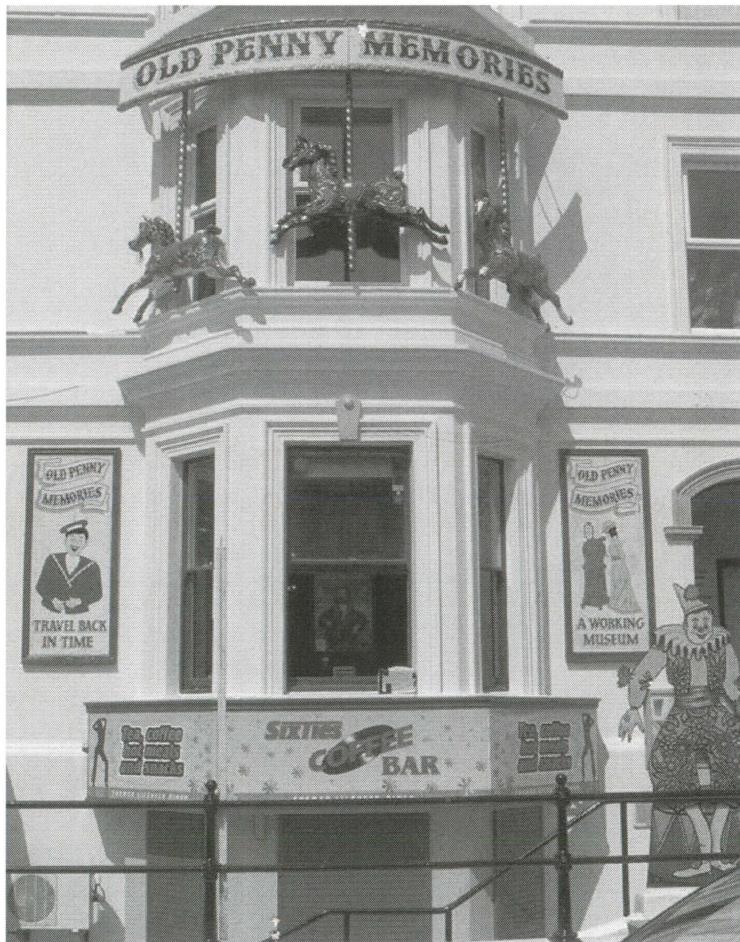


# MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

ISSUE 37

SEPT. 2009



*Now back after a long summer recess!*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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# Editorial

Hello again (at long last)! The more observant among you will probably have noticed it's been some time since the last magazine – three months in fact. The school holidays seemed to start early this year, with many schools breaking up on the 17<sup>th</sup> July, and so I was open daily at Brighton before managing to get the July issue finished. I had hoped to be able to get it out sometime in August, but then I remembered why I don't publish a magazine in August – I simply don't have the time!

You may wonder why I've been so pressed for time this year. Well, it was my intention to open a second arcade at Brighton, ready for the school summer holidays, with a minimum of about two dozen machines. I had always intended borrowing a few floor-standing machines from another operator (which I've done), but my problem was with wall machines. It's easy to fill an arcade with allwins, but novelty machines are not so easy to come by, so I had the bright idea to build some! And that's where the problems started. In short, I totally underestimated the time required to produce these wondrous new pieces of 'vintage coin-op'. The school holidays arrived; the arcade wasn't ready; none of the machines were finished; my twelve hour days then became sixteen hour days.....and that's why the July magazine didn't happen. Anyway, I eventually opened the 'number 2' arcade ready for the August bank holiday weekend – six weeks later than intended. I'll publish more details next month, in the meantime, I'm sorry about the July mag. When I started the magazine over three years ago, I vowed this would never happen. Seems I was wrong.

Well, that's it for now, I need a rest for a few days (not that it's likely to happen). The October magazine should follow this within a couple of weeks, as the entry forms for the Coventry auction will be included, and I don't want them to be late.

Until then

All the best

*Jerry*

# News and Coming Events

## Save Dreamland

Back in the March issue of the magazine, I stated that the reopening of Margate's Dreamland as a heritage amusement park was looking increasingly likely to become a reality. A recent award of £384,500 by the Heritage Lottery Fund is seen as the first step toward greater funding, and will enable the campaign to move forward with the project; part of the money to be used to employ three full time staff.

Meanwhile, another vintage ride has been acquired from Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Following the acquisition of the Whip last year, the trust has now secured the junior Whip – thus accommodating all ages! The junior Whip was installed at the Pleasure Beach in 1927, and is now the last original ride of its kind in this country, since the example at Southend has apparently been completely rebuilt. (If anyone has details of the Southend whip and why it was rebuilt, please let me know. Surely its historical importance must have been known, so why rebuild it?)

I spoke with Nick Laister, chairman of the Dreamland Trust, earlier in the summer, and he has agreed to write a regular update for the magazine, hopefully starting next month. In the meantime go to [www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk) for more information.

## It's that time of year again!

The autumn run of slotties' events kicks off with Bonhams sale at Knowle on 29<sup>th</sup> September, which includes a number of slot machines and jukeboxes. And if you've ever fancied owning a Green Ray, one is on offer in the Knightsbridge sale the following day. Both sales include many other interesting lots, including radio, television, gramophones, musical boxes etc. Catalogues for both sales can be viewed online at [www.bonhams.com](http://www.bonhams.com).

Joby Carter's Fairground and Circus auction on 25<sup>th</sup> October will no doubt build on the success of last year's sale, although with the emphasis this time on smaller collectables and memorabilia, rather than larger fairground rides and transport which seemed difficult to 'shift' last year. Catalogues are now available at £5, and can be ordered by posting cheques to: Carters Yard, Grove Park, White Waltham, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3IF, or telephone 01628 829901 for credit card payments. As yet, there doesn't appear to be any lot details or pictures online, as there was last year, but it's worth checking the website for updates at [www.cartersentertainment.com](http://www.cartersentertainment.com).

## **Coventry '09**

Yes, it's the big one! Now firmly established as the biggest annual slotties event in the UK, I can confirm the Central England Vintage Coin-Op Show and Auction will be at the Coundon Social Club, Coventry, on 29<sup>th</sup> November. For those of you new to the magazine, this event is presented by Jeremy Clapham and myself, and is therefore run 'by collectors for collectors' and is the one Sunday in the year you cannot afford to miss! Full details and entry forms will be included in the October magazine, so start sorting out your lots and get ready to fill in those forms.

## **Dates for your diary**

**Bonhams Mechanical Music & Collectables Sale** 29<sup>th</sup> September  
Knowle, Nr Coventry

**Bonhams Collection of Early Technology Sale** 30<sup>th</sup> September  
Knightsbridge

**Jukebox Madness** 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> October  
Kempton Park Racecourse

**Joby Carter's Fairground & Circus Auction** 25<sup>th</sup> October  
White Waltham, Berkshire

**Bonhams Fine Mechanical Music Sale** 10<sup>th</sup> November  
Knightsbridge

**MMM Vintage Slot Collectors' Show & Auction** 29<sup>th</sup> November  
Coventry

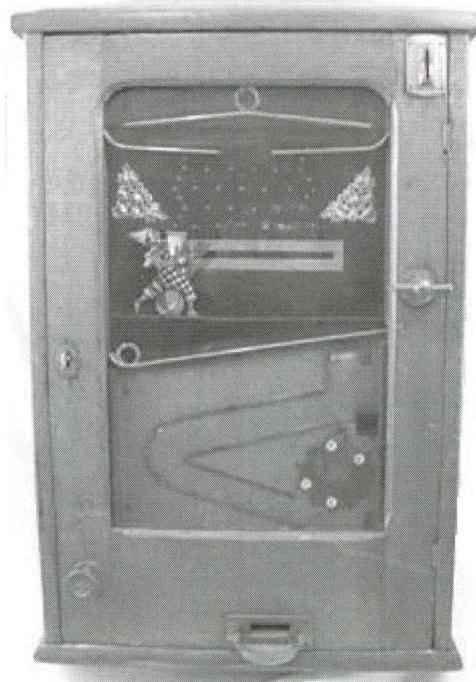
Don't forget – if you know of any event which would be of interest to readers of the magazine, please let me know so that I can include details in these pages.

# Anatomy of a Clown

Part II

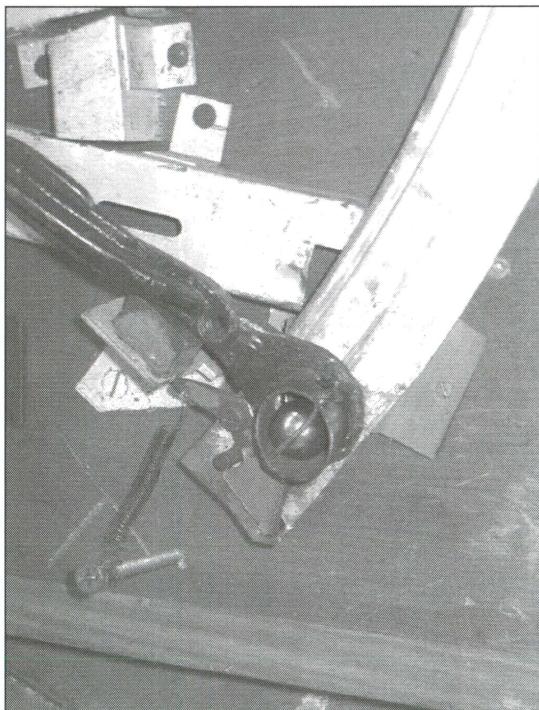
By John Peterson

If your memory is superior to mine, (not much of a challenge, I will admit,) please forgive me while I recap our story up to this point. At the end of **Anatomy of a Clown, part I**, I was awaiting delivery of my latest love, a Bajazzo or clown catching game that I purchased in an Ebay auction. The game was non-working but advertised as being complete – maybe – and with several features that began to make me think, after I had already made the successful bid, that the game was not original. Two items in particular that caused the most doubt were the hinges that definitely had something funky going on, and the domed top to the case, a feature that I had never, ever seen on a clown catcher. My concern was that I had purchased a composite game, one where the original door and mechanism had been added to a much later (and incorrect) case.



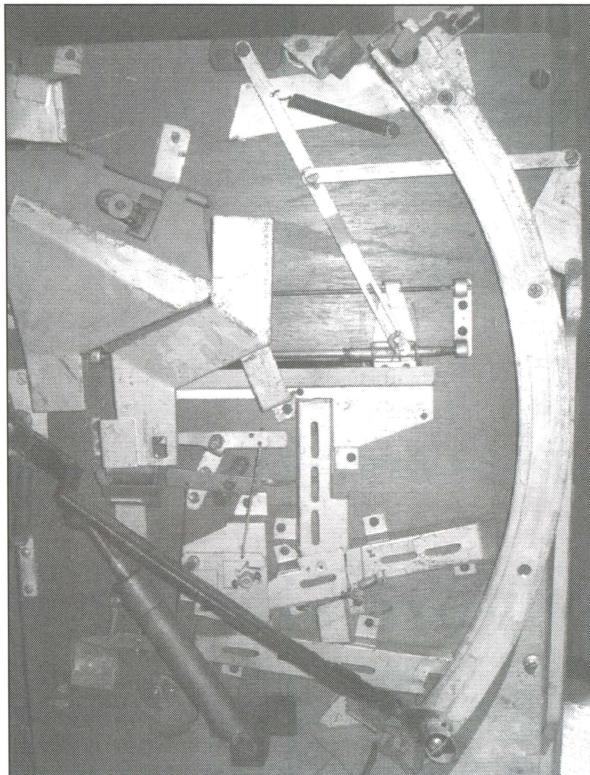
The Day of Reckoning arrived. The doorbell rang and Greg, my main UPS man smiled as he delivered the oversize box. I tore into it and carefully removed my treasure. I could hear a ball rolling inside the mechanism so I did what any proud owner would do; I deposited a coin and held my breath as I activated the ball-lift lever. *Boink!* Something dropped inside the case. I opened it up and there, lying on the bottom of the case, was a small blue marble. These games are made to operate on a steel ball bearing. A glass marble is too light to trigger the inner workings of the game. I replaced the marble with the correct size bearing and activated the game with another coin. As I raised the ball-lift lever again, I heard the same sound only louder this time as the steel bearing fell out of its holder on the way to the top entry hole.

Now would be a good time to explain how this game works. **Photo A** is the ball lift arm at rest at the bottom of the arc. You can see the ball resting in its 'carry' position at the end of the lift arm. Using the 'T' handle on the right side of the front of the game, the player is able to lift the arm from its full 'down' position to the full 'up' position where the ball enters the top of the playfield. After a round of the game played, win or lose, the ball is retained inside the mechanism at a 'gate.' Putting a coin into the coin slot opens the gate and releases the ball, which rolls down into the carry position at the end of the lift arm.



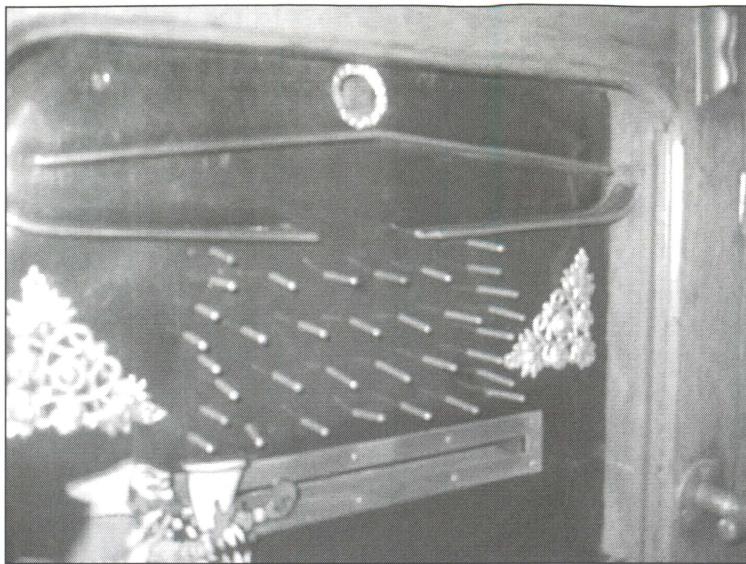
**Photo A**

**Photo B** is a wider shot of the interior mechanism. You can see the ball lift arm at rest. The crescent-shaped flat metal piece extending from bottom to top, right side, is the track that keeps the bearing from falling out while it is lifted to the top where the ball rolls out, entering the playfield at the hole seen in **Photo C**. The player controls the clown and if the ball is caught by the clown after bouncing through the pinfield, the clown is retracted to the far left and the ball drops inside, activating the payout wheel, **Photo D**. If the clown misses the ball, it rolls into the drain hole. In either situation, the ball returns to the gate to await another coin release.

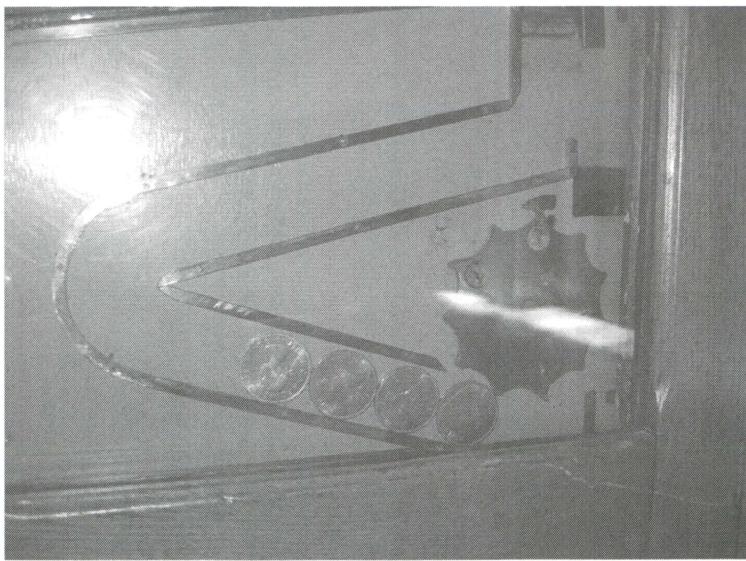


**Photo B**

One of the problems with my Bajazzo was the metal crescent strip; it was not parallel to and tight against the arc of the ball lift arm. As my lifter arm raised the ball, the metal strip curved inward, allowing the ball to drop out of its holder and fall into the bottom of the case. Why would someone mess with the height of the metal strip, I wondered? I have no idea. The fix was as simple as putting a series of thick washers underneath the track braces thereby raising the metal track back to its proper position.



**Photo C**



**Photo D**

A more challenging problem concerned the open coin track on the face of the game, **Photo D**. What you see is the proper size track for the correct coin, the old British big penny. When I received Bajazzo, this track had been narrowed to fit a much smaller coin. The problem was, I had no idea what that smaller coin was. Like any good idiot, I tried a variety of coins, trying to find the one that: 1) activated the interior mechanism that controlled the ball release, and 2) properly fit the exterior payout wheel. The closest fit I could find was the old British halfpenny. It would release the ball and would sometimes work with the wheel. I say ‘sometimes’ because sometimes, it would roll right past the wheel and into the payout cup. You need to understand that as the coins are fed into the game, they immediately drop into the external track where they are trapped by the wheel, awaiting payout for a winning catch. They are the visible sign of potential wealth available to the skilful player, the equivalent of the carnival barker who yells out as you and your bride try and sneak by, unseen: “HEY, YOU! We can’t have the coins roll right past that payout wheel and right back to the players without a winning catch now, can we? NO, WE CANNOT”!

I played and played with this segment without success until it finally occurred to me; maybe the exterior coin track had been altered and I was experimenting with the wrong size coin. I took a closer look at the payout wheel and discovered that the old 1d penny was the correct size to fit the indentations in the wheel. This drove me to look at the coin track bars. Very close inspection revealed the lower track had been moved upward, narrowing the distance to fit a smaller coin. Once I re-adjusted the track back to its original position, the game came together. The 1d coins were the size originally intended to operate this venerable game. With these two rather simple adjustments, the game was now back in business as originally intended, stealing pennies from the gullible and the overly optimistic, me!

Now to the final issue, the one thing that kept me awake for nights prior to getting my hands on my newest love. Is this Bajazzo completely original, including the case? In a word, no. **Photo F** is a close-up of the hinges. Clearly, the cutouts for the door and the case show two different size hinges on the original pieces. This door and its mechanism originally were mated to a different case. I was correct in my suspicions that this domed case is an imposter. If there is good news, (and there is always a bright side for the true collector, my friends), it is that this case is also from the same period and it is also from the same country: Germany. Whoever put these two together did an admirable job of mating two parts that, when joined, look like they belong together like an aged husband and wife. The colour of the wood and the grain patterns are so well suited that, absent the telltale signs of the hinges and the dome, most collectors would never have suspected anything amiss. My considered opinion is that this is a German 1920’s Jentsch & Meierz “Bajazzo” mated to a German allwin case, also of the same vintage. This game was originally manufactured for export to the British market, this conclusion supported by the coin size appropriate for the interior mechanism as well as the exterior payout wheel.



**Photo E**

Is there a moral here? Of course there is. And it is this. Even those of us who have been in the field a long time and consider ourselves to be “knowledgeable,” (“expert” being too strong a term, particularly in view of the story above), make mistakes and come to the wrong conclusion sometimes, just like anybody else. Nobody knows it all. The day I stop learning is the day I exhale my last breath. Rejoice in being a part of a fascinating hobby where there is **still so much to learn!**

**THE END**

*John Peterson, USA*

# The (not Bollands) Burglar

By Richard Goddard

Regrettably, this article is not about the Bolland Burglar working model, I only wish it was. I last contributed an article to MMM last autumn; a jovial look at the machines at Southport Pier, little did I realise then that my next contribution would be anything but jovial and would relate to my machines being stolen.

I read with interest Richard Brewerton's letter in the June edition of MMM regarding the stolen machines. The burglary was very upsetting and distressing not only to me but also for my wife Sally, because quite a few other personal items were stolen as well. I was going to use the word devastating but on reflection that is too harsh a word, the Asian Tsunami was devastating, we all know that countless individuals were killed, it ruined people's lives and deprived many of their livelihood; my loss is totally insignificant compared to this.

But then we all exist in our own individual worlds and are often oblivious to circumstances other than those that directly affect us. Some widen their 'life experiences' by actively doing charity work or becoming involved within organisations but in the main we are becoming generally solitary creatures, compared to a generation ago.

Many of Richard Brewerton's comments were spot on. The police have indeed phoned me to say that the case has now been 'filed' and that means no further action or investigation but they were in fact more thorough than I had expected. They did conduct house-to-house enquiries and did keep us informed of developments, we also received calls from the community support officer and crime reduction officer – note that the title of Crime Prevention is no longer used!

The burglary has given us a further understanding to the phrase Victims of Crime. A burglary was something that we considered *could* happen but never thought it actually *would*. To come home from a very pleasant evening to find that your home, your own very personal private spaces have been violated by someone is indescribable. It left a very deep sick feeling in the pit of my stomach and I consider the act of a burglar going from room to room and riffling through your own personal possessions as 'psychological rape'.

I have been asking myself many questions since that night and the biggest question is '*do I wish to continue collecting machines*'? Over the past couple of months I find this the most difficult question to answer. I do not wish to collect anything if I can't share the pleasure with other people and this is where my point about being rather 'solitary' comes from. We keep ourselves to ourselves not because people are intrinsically lonely, private or withdrawn; but for self-preservation purposes and that is a sad indictment of today's society.

I am still unsure whether I was a target or whether the thief just got lucky. The police expressed a view that it contained the hallmarks of opportunist and unprofessional thieves – who knows. We were only out for a few hours when it happened and the only people who knew we were not at home were the friends that we visited. Last year I wrote a series of articles for MMM about photographing slot machines and included a number of photos of my machines. I have asked myself numerous times, did I inadvertently advertise the fact to the thief (or unscrupulous collector) that I had these machines, through the very pages of this magazine. I hope in all sincerity that it was not via these pages.

It has taken me some time to get over this and for weeks I just ignored the slot-collecting world on the web and in MMM, I just could not bring myself round to looking on the web or reading about my hobby. However, in such circumstances we need to move on and that is exactly what I intend to do, so yes I will be collecting again but my machines will now be kept away from my home.

Good advice to all collectors who own machines have already been covered by Jerry's article in the May edition, and Richard's letter in the June edition of MMM, and Richard's suggestion of a 'stolen register' is a very good idea. Thankfully, I had taken many photos of my machines both inside and out and this greatly assisted in proof of ownership. Be aware that insurance companies insist that if you claim for anything stolen you need to prove ownership of that item; and the reason is that there are in excess of 2000 false insurance claims *per week* in the UK. I have to say that the insurance company have been very good and I have not encountered any insurance problems at all.

Following on from Richard's comments regarding safeguarding your machines, as well as bolting machines to walls/floors etc one recommendation that I would urge all collectors to do is install a burglar alarm. If you do not have one, sell one of your machines to pay for it! This piece of equipment is the single most effective deterrent to the burglar. I would gladly forfeit one machine to save all the others. I started off this article by mentioning Bollands Burglar..... now did they also produce the executioner as well!! I leave it to your own imagination as to where my thought process is going.

I would like to thank Jerry for all his help during this time both behind-the-scenes and through the pages of MMM, I sincerely hope that fellow collectors will not suffer the same fate. It is times such as these that the value of this magazine comes to the fore, it not only serves as a catalyst for collectors of machines but also as a channel to feed through views, thoughts and ideas to other like-minded individuals.

***Richard Goddard***

# My One Penny Birthday Treat

By Stuart Dale

It was the weekend of the 29<sup>th</sup> May, it was my 56<sup>th</sup> birthday, and my wife had organised a special treat! *A special treat for a keen slottie that is.* She had arranged for us to have the weekend away at Bridlington, and she could not have picked a better weekend as the sun was cracking the flags it was so hot. She picked Bridlington because she knew I would want to look in on Chris Parcell's Old Penny Memories Museum and play with the vintage penny machines, and why not I am only 56 after all.

The Old Penny Memories Museum is on Marlborough Terrace and you would find it hard to miss with its distinctive frontage sporting three fairground galloping horses high up on the wall above the entrance door. Once up the steps and inside the museum you are greeted by a wide range of vintage penny machines dating from the 1920s right through to the early 1970s, all of which are in full working order and just waiting for your old pennies. These can be obtained from Chris Parcell's daughter Steph who works in the change kiosk just inside the main door. She is also kept busy looking after the machines and keeping the customers happy.



*A nice selection of wall machines at Old Penny Memories.*

I think it is safe to say that there is a machine to suit everyone in there somewhere, whether you like the old oak cased mechanical machines of the 1940s or the Formica faced electro-mechanical versions of the 1960s. If you are into pinball there is also a small side room with a few vintage pinball machines for you to play. My wife liked to play the sweetie allwins, of which there are a number to choose from, these machines payout dummy sweets which you then take to the kiosk and exchanged for sweets or more pennies etc.

If after your workout on the machines you should fancy some refreshments, then it is just a short trip (pun intended) down the stairs and in to the sixties themed coffee bar with its jukebox and period decor for a drink and a snack. Unfortunately, the coffee bar was closed on the days we were there which was a shame but I can still remember it from my last visit a few years ago, but I was told by Steph that it will be reopening soon. I was also advised that the museum is open throughout the summer season but it is a good idea to check the opening times before travelling to avoid disappointment, details can be found on their website [www.oldpennymemories.co.uk](http://www.oldpennymemories.co.uk) I took a few photos so I could share them with you all, better still pop down and have a look yourself, I'm sure you will like it. Well that's the birthday out of the way! Now what can she get me for Christmas???



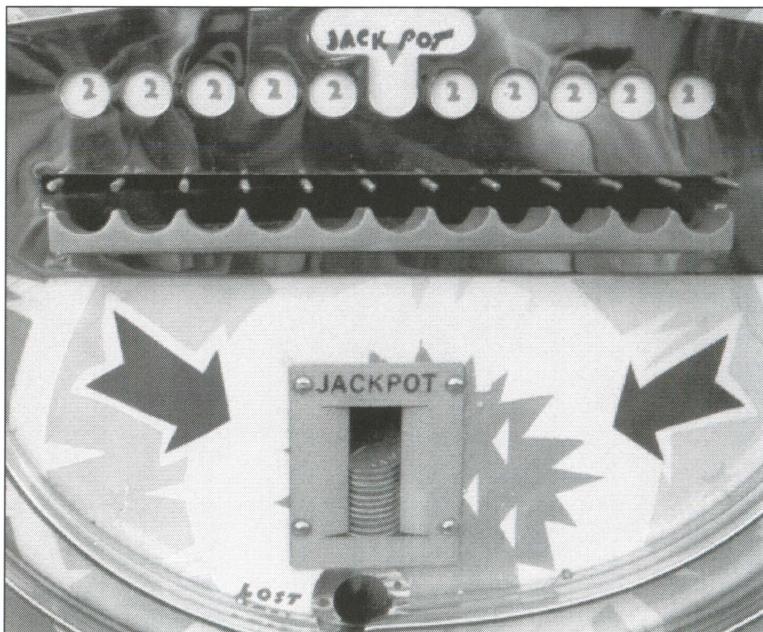
*A general view of the arcade, including an early Cromptons pusher in the foreground.*

# Playing the Slots Part 3

By Robert Rowland

Imagine the scene, it's a very busy Sunday afternoon in July here in Mablethorpe in the 1960s. The place is full with day trippers, and the coach park is just about full. Time for me, I think, to get out of the crush and make my way into Queens Arcade to play some slots. As I enter, I hear the sound of distant drums. Yes, Jim Reeves is the 45 that's playing at the moment. Keep walking, right to the back of this smaller arcade on the back wall is the slot in question.

It's called **Jackpot**, a very nice allwin made by Kraft in the 1960s. The front even displays a little jackpot window, which shows twelve pennies that you would win if landing the ball into the middle jackpot section. Most allwins pay 2d or a maximum of 6d, this doesn't. A ball in the jackpot pays 12d (a bob)! Two days spending money in my case (considered a very big win at the time). This allwin has eleven winning sections along the top, five 2d wins, jackpot, then another 2d wins, with a lost hole below.

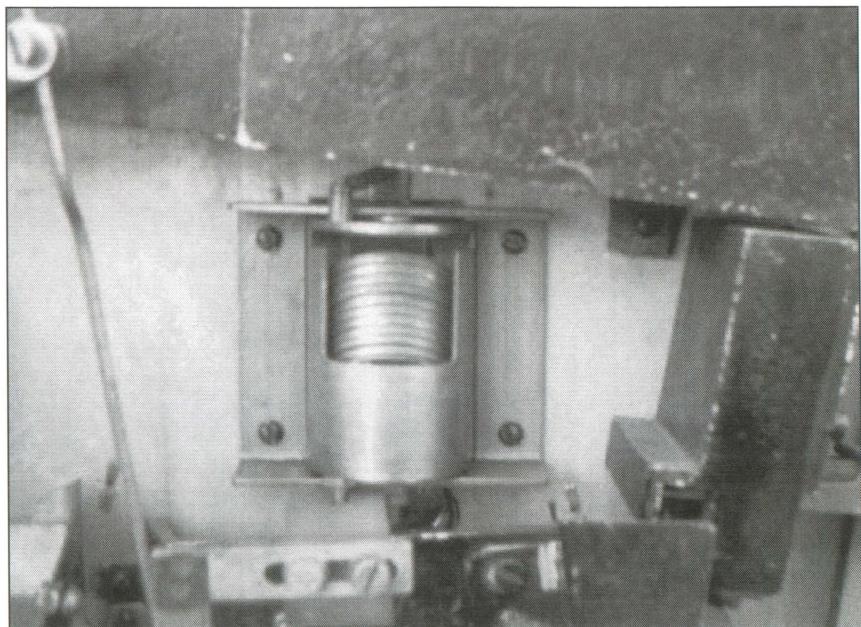


**Jackpot**, showing the eleven win gallery and jackpot window below.

Right, let's play this slot. Penny in, flick ball. It's a 2d winner, one turn of the pay-out knob and two coins are returned. Again, flick, oh unlucky, ball went round twice, bounced on the pins before dropping into the lost. Again, good, long spin this time, but straight into lost. Let's try flicking the trigger slower. Flick, winner! It's landed in the 2d next to the jackpot (oh so close), two coins returned. Penny in, flick, pins again, bounce and lost. This allwin had virtually cleaned me out, then after about twenty four spins, it happened. Penny in, flick ball, once round then plop, straight into the jackpot cup.

As I turn the payout knob, the twelve pennies on view in the jackpot window turn, moving them out of sight. Then twelve pennies appear in the payout tray, and the same twelve pennies show themselves again in the jackpot window. A very clever illusion this, my twelve pennies have in fact come out of the payout tube inside the machine, and are not those that are displayed in the jackpot window. These never move, just go out of sight when the payout knob is turned on the jackpot win. Of course, as long as I get twelve pennies in the payout tray, I don't care where they come from!

This allwin is a big challenge, very addictive as well as very frustrating. A gem of a slot, I could literally play this all day. All the losers I've had, yet the thrill when that ball actually landed in the jackpot, a magical feeling, a sense of utter achievement. Years later, and you've guessed it, I own one. This allwin literally takes me back every time I play it, all I need to do now is get my Jim Reeves 45 out, and then back I go..... I hear the sound of distant drums, far away, so far away. Never to be forgotten days.



*The jackpot window, which revolves when the payout knob is turned on a jackpot win.*

The next arcade I enter is called the Empire (Sounds like a cinema, but it wasn't). This particular arcade is a family run business, the owner (in his 60s) is a miserable old sod. As I walk in, there he is, sat in the change desk in the centre of the arcade, looking the slightest excuse to throw me out! I have come in here to play an electro-mechanical machine called **Twin Bell** (maker unknown). A superb, attractive wall machine, we have five symbols on the glass front: a cheery or lemon pays 2d, a plum pays 4d, an orange pays 6d, a bell pays 12d. A double bell pays a gold award token (which could be exchanged at the cash desk for various gifts/toys). There is also a 'lost' at the top.



**Twin Bell**, does anyone know the makers name?

This machine is on automatic play, so as I approach it all the five symbols are flashing in a random sequence. Bell, lemon, double bell, plum, lemon, bell, cherry etc. Oh, the double bell has just come up, OK, play now. Lights up, I will bet on the plum. Cherry came up, and would have paid 2d. Let's bet cherry again. No, lemon won. Here we go again, I will bet cherry and bell. Flash flash etc., oh no, it's the orange that won. Right, you are now annoying me, I will bet them all! That's 5d in, flash flash flash, no! The lost has come up, I've lost all five pennies in one go. Great fun to play, but also a very frustrating slot. I won't give up, let's bet plum. Flash flash flash, yes plum wins, da da, I won 4d, got a winner in the end. Hey, double bell has just won again. I smell a rat with this machine. The times that you back the bell and it never comes up (or the lost lights up instead), yet when you stand there watching the machine in automatic play, the bell or double bell comes up at least four or five times in every ten spins. Very strange that. This slot does attract you, and gives 100% amusement, but for actually winning on the damn thing! I will play this slot again at a later date. Oh, don't tell me the owner is actually smiling (that's a first). Yes, he has done me, and probably saw every penny I lost. I will now leave this arcade with a bad loss. Still, at least I am leaving of my own free will, not this time having been thrown out for actually doing nothing wrong.

These were super days, and great fun too. Now years later, I can tell you all the truth. I have a twin bell in my collection, and inside there is a little round knob, with four positions. This can stop the bell coming up when a bet has been placed on it, and another position can make the lost light up when the bell has been backed. Just think, years ago I never really had a chance! But it was still good fun at the time, and I wouldn't change a thing. Magic days.

## Editor's Comment

Many thanks to Robert for his latest trip down memory lane, which will continue next month. I've never come across **Twin Bell** before, and am intrigued by the internal switch, which effectively meant the machine was rigged. I wonder whether this was factory built, or whether it had been added by the operator? Tales of operators rigging their machines are not uncommon, but I don't think I've encountered a machine that was built in this dubious state.....surely not legal?

Anyway, if anyone knows anything more about Twin Bells, or any other electro-mech. that was rigged, please let me know. It would be interesting to know whether this was a more common practice than I might previously have imagined.

**Lineage ads. are free to subscribers and will run for two issues, unless you instruct me otherwise. Please ensure I have your ads. by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next month's issue. Remember to include your telephone number and the area where you live. Post or e-mail to the address on page 2**

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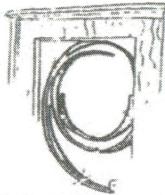
Check out website  
[www.gazzaspinballs.co.uk](http://www.gazzaspinballs.co.uk)

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### **Original Clown Tokens**

Brass or Silver  
£25 per 100, inc. p&p

Tony 01622 820263



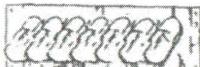
## ALLWIN TRACK

Grooved & chromed just like the original.

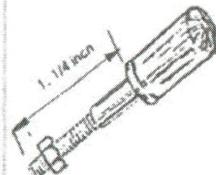
*Inner* with flat & nipple  
17½" inside length  
*Middle* 18" inside length  
*Outer* 40" inside length



Win Tabs Red printed on Silver foil sticky backed 12 on a sheet



CHROMED 7 ball win gallery. 6 x 1. 9/16



CHROMED THUMB STOP

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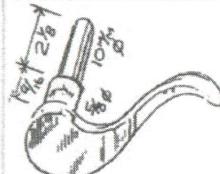
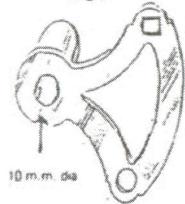
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1-5 £9.99 each  
6-10 £7.99 each  
11+ £5.99 each

N13 Spandrels £14.99

N14 Allwin Track  
inner £19.00  
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set of 3 £47.00

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Discount for quantity orders - please ring.

CHROMED TRIGGER FRONT



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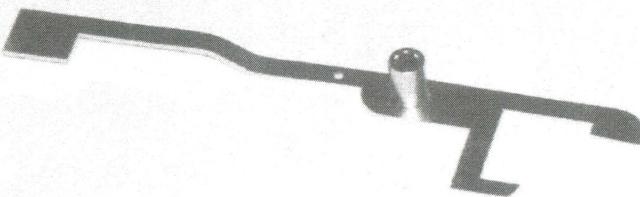
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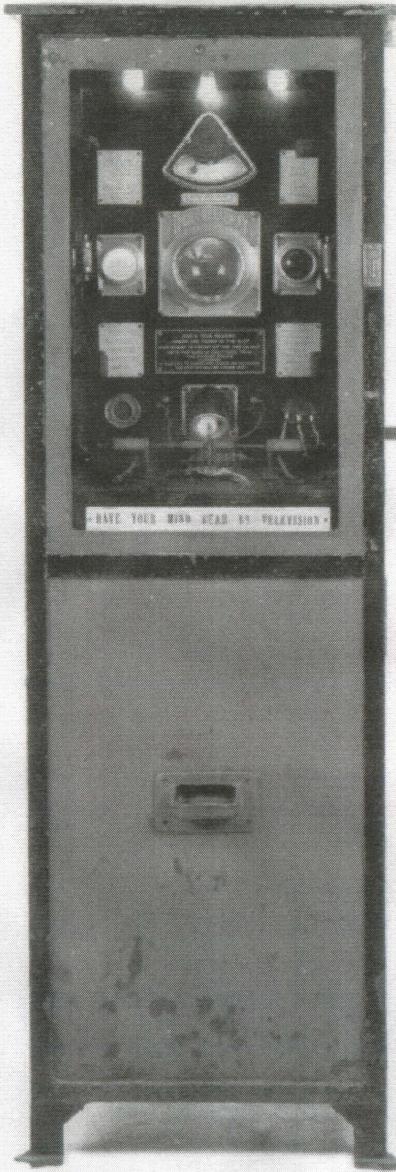
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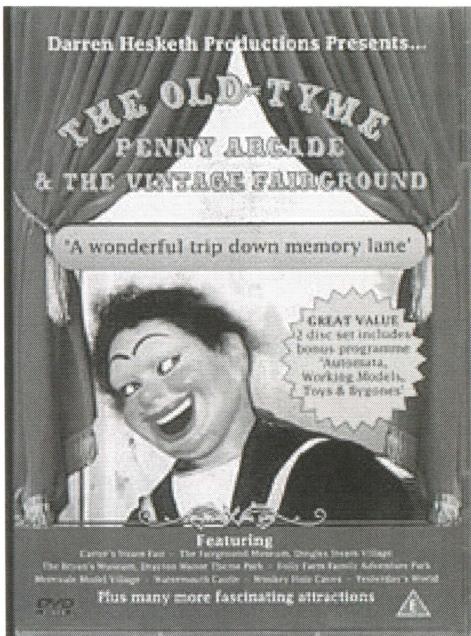
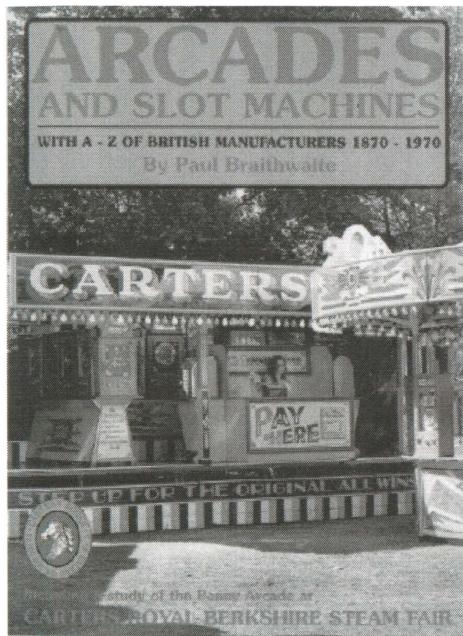
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